Etefia and the Magic Umbrella

NATHANIEL UWAK

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Nathaniel Uwak

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Dedication

For dreamers everywhere, who dare to chase a melody that only they can hear.

"The road to success is often lonely, mocked by those who do not see the vision, but celebrated by the same people once the vision is fulfilled."

- Nathaniel Uwak

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Chapter One:

Whispers on the Harmattan Wind

The sun hung lazily in the sky, casting golden rays over Koguma Village. The air was thick with the scent of fresh earth, and the distant bleating of goats harmonized with the rhythmic pounding of mortars from the women's huts. It was a village alive with tradition, ruled by its wise king and governed by ancient customs passed down through generations.

Among its people was Etefia, a young man with eyes that held the spark of something different—something restless. Unlike his peers, who were content with tending to their fathers' farms or following in the footsteps of their ancestors, Etefia's heart burned with a longing for the unknown.

For as long as he could remember, he had heard tales of the Big City. The village elders spoke of it in hushed voices, as if it were a realm beyond comprehension. They described a place where towering buildings touched the sky, where roads stretched endlessly, and where men crafted wonders beyond Koguma's imagination.

“Only the wealthy can journey there,” his uncle would say, shaking his head. “It is a place of mystery and marvels, but it is not for men like us.”

Yet, Etefia refused to accept this as truth. He believed that destiny held more for him than a life confined to his small village. And so, while others spent their nights by the warmth of their family fires, Etefia sat under the old baobab tree, gazing at the stars, dreaming of a day when he would stand among the marvels of the Big City.

Determined to see this world beyond Koguma, Etefia took to laboring tirelessly. He had a skill for crafting, weaving intricate baskets that traders from nearby villages sought after. Each coin he earned, he set aside, nurturing his dream like a delicate flame.

As the years passed, his savings grew, and with them, his hope. The villagers took notice of his determination, whispering about the young man with grand aspirations. Some admired his spirit; others scoffed, believing his efforts futile. But Etefia was undeterred.

Chapter Two:

The Weight of Coins and a Crushing Sky

The days blurred into nights as Etefia poured every ounce of his strength into his dream. He worked harder than ever—mending baskets, carrying heavy loads for traders, and taking on tasks' others found too tiring. His fingers blistered from endless labor, but he welcomed the pain. Every coin he earned brought him one step closer to his goal.

But fate was cruel.

One night, the sky split open with a furious storm. The winds roared through Koguma, tearing leaves from the trees and drowning the earth in relentless rain. Etefia barely slept, his mind consumed with worry. When morning came, his worst fears were confirmed—his savings, his years of sacrifice, **all washed away.**

His heart crumbled.

As he sat staring at the muddy ruins of his efforts, hoping to find even a single coin, his friends and family came to him—not with comfort, but with mockery.

"You see now, Etefia?" his cousin scoffed. "The gods do not want you to leave. You should stay here and live as we do."

Even his father shook his head. "You have wasted enough time on foolish dreams. What is in the Big City that is not here? Stay, my son, and embrace the life you were given."

His friends urged him to forget his ambitions. They laughed at the idea of a mere village boy standing among the towering wonders of the city. **"You are chasing shadows, Etefia,"** they said. **"You will never belong there."**

But Etefia's spirit refused to break.

With clenched fists and burning resolve, he started again. The nights were longer, the work harder, the loneliness deeper—but he did not falter. He weaved faster, worked longer, and sacrificed even more. While others danced at the village square, he labored. While they feasted, he saved. He no longer spoke of the city; he simply worked toward it.

It took two more years of sweat and sacrifice, but at last, his pouch was full again. This time, he was careful—hiding his earnings in secret places, never taking his eyes off his goal.

And then, the day finally came.

The news spread through the village like wildfire—Etefia was leaving. The same people who once mocked him now watched in silence, some with regret, others with quiet admiration.

His parents stood before him; their faces unreadable. His father sighed. "You are stubborn, my son. Perhaps that is a gift. May the gods guide your path my son."

The elders gathered, their voices solemn. **"The road ahead is not kind,"** one of them said. **"But a man who survives the storm is stronger because of it."**

"I will bring back development to Koguma, I will make you all proud." Etefia promised.

And so, with nothing but a small sack and a heart full of courage, Etefia took his first steps beyond Koguma—toward the unknown, toward the Big City, toward destiny.

Chapter Three:

The Land of Giants

The journey to the Big City was unlike anything Etefia had ever experienced.

He traveled aboard a rattling wooden cart, squeezed between traders carrying woven baskets, clay pots, and dried fish. The path was long and winding, stretching far beyond the familiar trees of Koguma. As they moved, he watched the landscape transform—the dense forests faded into open plains, then into scattered clusters of houses. The further they went, the more the world changed.

Villages along the way grew larger, busier. He saw markets filled with goods he could not name, heard languages that twisted strangely on his tongue. Smoke rose from forges where blacksmiths hammered metal into tools. The scent of roasted meat and spices filled the air, making his stomach rumble.

As night fell, the cart stopped at a roadside inn where travelers gathered around fires, trading stories from distant lands. Etefia listened in silence, absorbing every word. He was no longer just a boy from Koguma—he was a traveler now, stepping into the unknown.

By the time the city's silhouette appeared on the horizon, he felt like he had already lived a thousand lives.

Then, at last, he arrived.

The moment Etefia stepped into the city, he knew he was no longer in the world he once knew.

Everything was **bigger, louder, and faster** than anything his imagination had ever painted. The roads stretched wider than the Koguma River, filled with wagons made of metal, rolling without horses. Buildings pierced the sky like ancient trees, their glass surfaces reflecting the golden light of the sun. People moved in all directions, their faces buried in conversations, their clothes unlike anything he had seen.

He had **arrived in the land of giants.**

For the first three days, Etefia wandered the city, absorbing every sight, every sound. He watched merchants shout over each other in the markets, selling goods he had never seen before. He marveled at the flickering lamps that did not need fire, at the moving pictures displayed on large screens that told stories without a single elder speaking. He had planned for this journey, but nothing could have prepared him for the overwhelming vastness of it all.

On the third day, as Etefia wandered the city, something peculiar caught his eye.

Outside a small store, people walked past carrying strange, colorful objects. They clutched them tightly, their fingers wrapped around the curved handles, but he could not understand their purpose. Some held them low by their sides, while others balanced them over their shoulders. The objects were long and slender, wrapped in fabric, their pointed tips almost brushing against the ground as their owners strode past without a care.

Etefia frowned. **What were these things?**

"What are these?" he murmured under his breath, stepping closer to a group of men standing under a shop's overhang. He greeted them and tried finding out what this strange contraption were for. One of the men responded "A shield for the rain of cause?". Etefia was shocked that people would need to shield themselves from the rain, a blessing from the gods.

Back in Koguma, rain was welcomed—a blessing from the gods, a chance for children to dance in the mud, and for farmers to rejoice. But here, something strange was happening.

People did not welcome the rain.

Instead, they were carrying contraptions—**colorful domes with sticks attached to them.** Objects meant to shield them from the downpour. Etefia had never seen anything like it.

Just then, his eyes landed on a small store, its window filled with **hundreds of these strange objects.** Some were black, others blue, red, or yellow. The shopkeeper, a bald man with a round belly, stood by the entrance, watching passersby with mild amusement.

Summoning his courage, Etefia took a deep breath and approached.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, his accent thick with the rhythm of his village. "What are these things?"

The shopkeeper raised a brow. "You've never seen an umbrella before?"

Etefia shook his head. "In my village, when it rains, we dance."

The man chuckled. "Well, in the city, we don't dance. We stay dry." He picked up one of the umbrellas and handed it to Etefia.

Etefia turned it over in his hands, feeling the cool metal rod, the tightly wrapped fabric. **What power did this hold?**

“And anyone can own this?” he asked.

“If you have the money.”

Etefia had saved just enough for food and a place to sleep, but at that moment, he **knew he had to take this piece of the city back home. His dream of the big City was always to bring back development to Koguma.**

Without hesitation, he handed over a few of his remaining coins. The shopkeeper smiled and placed a small black umbrella in his hands. “Wow! The Magic Umbrella” he acclaimed happily.

As Etefia stepped back onto the streets, gripping his magic umbrella as he called it tightly, a new thought took root in his mind.

Koguma had never seen anything like this.

If the Big City had this one wonder, what else did it hold? What other secrets lay hidden in its towering buildings and endless streets? And more importantly, if an umbrella could **change how people lived**, what could he bring back to his village that would change their world forever?

With a racing heart and a mind filled with possibilities, Etefia knew what he had to do.

He was **going home.**

Chapter Four:

The Rain that Drenched a Hero

Etefia's return to Koguma was nothing short of a hero's welcome. Long before he reached the village, news of his arrival had spread like wildfire. The people of Koguma gathered at the village square, their faces alight with excitement and curiosity. The king sat upon his carved wooden throne, flanked by the elders and warriors of the land. The air buzzed with anticipation as the villagers whispered among themselves, eager to hear the tales of the Big City and the wonders their son had seen.

Drummers beat their talking drums, and women danced in rhythmic steps, their colorful wrappers swirling around them. Children ran ahead of Etefia, cheering and clapping, while his childhood friends, who once mocked his ambitions, now looked at him with reluctant admiration. His father, though still skeptical of his journey, stood tall with silent pride. His mother, though she never supported his dream, couldn't hide the relief in her eyes upon seeing her son return safely.

As Etefia reached the village square, he raised his hands, signaling for silence. All eyes were on him as he reached into his bag and pulled out the prized possession—the "magic

umbrella." Gasps of wonder rippled through the crowd as he held it high.

"I bring you a wonder from the Land of Giants," Etefia declared, his voice filled with pride. "This is no ordinary item! It is a charm of great power. With it, I will command the rain to stay away from me, no matter how heavy the storm!"

The murmurs of curiosity grew louder. Some villagers leaned in closer, eager to believe, while others exchanged skeptical glances. The king, after a moment of deep thought, rose from his throne and lifted his hand for silence.

"If this item is truly as powerful as you claim," the king said, his voice deep and measured, "then let it be put to the test. When the rainy season arrives, you shall demonstrate its power before all."

Etefia bowed respectfully. **"It shall be as you command, my king."**

For weeks, the village buzzed with excitement. The children sang songs about the "magic umbrella," and the elders debated its origins. Some believed it was a gift from the gods, while others scoffed, calling it a city trick. Etefia, however, remained confident. He had seen the people of the Big City hold this object in their hands. If they trusted it, why shouldn't he?

Three months later, the rains came.

The sky darkened with heavy clouds, and a cool wind swept through Koguma. The town crier immediately went around the village, announcing that everyone should gather at the village square to witness the power of the Magic Umbrella. The entire village rushed to the square, singing and dancing to native songs as it was their culture.

"Aya Adep ooh. Aya Adep ooh, Edim aya adep ooh," which means "Rain will fall, it will fall, it is about to rain." The villagers gathered once again in the square, huddled under the thatched roofs of nearby huts. Etefia, standing in the open, held the umbrella firmly, a confident smile playing on his lips.

The first drop of rain fell, then another. Soon, the sky opened up, sending a torrential downpour upon the village. The people gasped as they watched, waiting for the miracle to unfold.

But something was wrong.

Etefia stood tall, gripping the umbrella tightly—but the rain did not stop. It did not part around him like an invisible shield. Instead, it poured down mercilessly, soaking him to the skin. His clothes clung to his body, his hair dripped with water, and still, he refused to move, hoping for some hidden magic to reveal itself.

Laughter erupted.

The villagers, one by one, began to chuckle. The chuckles turned into giggles, and then into full-blown laughter. Even the elders, who had watched with solemn expressions, could not contain their amusement. The once-mighty "hero" of Koguma now stood before them, drenched and humiliated.

Etefia's heart pounded in his chest. He looked up at the king, hoping for some sign of understanding, but even the wise ruler had a smirk tugging at the corner of his lips. His childhood friends slapped their thighs, roaring with laughter, and even his own parents shook their heads in disappointment.

The king finally spoke again, his voice carrying a lesson hidden beneath his amusement. **"A man who does not test the depth of the river before wading in may find himself swept away."** The elders nodded in agreement, one of them adding, **"Not all that glitters in another land is gold in our own."**

With a heavy heart, Etefia lowered the umbrella and turned away. The dream he had so proudly carried had turned into a nightmare. He had returned home expecting to be a legend—but now, he was nothing more than the village fool.

As he walked through the mocking crowd, one question burned in his mind: *Had he misunderstood the true power of theBig City?*

Chapter Five:

The Baobab's Silent Counsel

The whispers spread like dry leaves caught in the harmattan wind.

"A fallen star," they called him.

Etefia's name, once sung with admiration, now became the subject of ridicule. Children mimicked his stance in the village square, pretending to hold an invisible umbrella against an imaginary storm, only to burst into laughter and scatter into the shadows. The elders shook their heads in disappointment, while the young men who once saw him as an inspiration now saw him as a cautionary tale.

"He left a dreamer and returned a fool," they muttered.

Etefia endured it all in silence. The laughter, the jeers, the pitiful glances from his own parents. But deep within him, a flame still flickered—dimmed but not extinguished. He had been humiliated, yes, but the mystery of the umbrella gnawed at him. There had to be something more, something he had missed.

And so, he made a silent vow.

Under the cover of night, he sat beside the old baobab tree, the same spot where he once gazed at the stars and dreamed

of a world beyond Koguma. Now, those dreams had turned into a mission. He would return to the Big City—not for wealth, not for glory, but for the truth.

With renewed determination, Etefia took to working even harder than before. He wove baskets at a pace that left his fingers sore and raw. He labored on farms that were not his own, lifting heavy loads and enduring the scorching sun without complaint. Day by day, coin by coin, he built his savings once again.

But this time, there was no celebration. No one cheered him on. His parents no longer asked about his ambitions, and his friends scoffed whenever they saw him counting his earnings.

"Haven't you learned your lesson?" they asked.

But Etefia did not answer.

When the time came, he packed his belongings without a word and left Koguma in silence. There was no farewell, no elders offering wisdom, no mother shedding tears. Only the distant hoot of an owl as he stepped onto the path leading to the Land of Giants once more.

The journey was long and arduous, but Etefia pressed on. He endured sleepless nights under the open sky and trudged through the roads with aching feet. The city's glow appeared

on the horizon like a distant promise, and when he finally arrived, his heart pounded—not with excitement, but with resolve.

He wasted no time wandering in awe. He navigated through the crowded streets with purpose, ignoring the towering buildings and the endless flow of people. He had only one destination in mind—the tiny shop where he had purchased the magic umbrella.

When he arrived, seeing the shopkeeper, he grabbed him by the shirt and yelled, "You sold me a fake Magic Umbrella! I will deal with you!" Other customers quickly intervened, asking what the problem was. Etefia narrated his entire experience. The shopkeeper, recalling the sale, said, "Ah! I remember you! The young man who asked me what an umbrella was two years ago. Let me see it."

Etefia placed the umbrella on the wooden counter. "I was deceived," he said bluntly. "You sold me a lie".

The shopkeeper inspected the umbrella and was shocked—it was still inside its original packaging, exactly as it had been sold. Out of curiosity, he asked, "How did you use it?" Etefia replied, "I held it in my right hand and stepped into the rain, but I got soaked within seconds." The entire shop erupted in laughter. The shopkeeper laughed so hard he fell to the ground. Some customers even mocked Etefia. "What a

fool!" one of them exclaimed. The shopkeeper, still chuckling, said, "Young man, you didn't even open the umbrella!" He tore off the packaging, unfolded the umbrella, with a swift motion, he pressed a small mechanism on the handle, and the umbrella sprang open with a soft *whoosh*.

Etefia's eyes widened in shock.

The shopkeeper twirled the umbrella and held it over his head. Etefia was stunned. He staggered back as realization crashed over him like a tidal wave. He had never seen the umbrella open. He had never asked how it worked. He had simply assumed. The weight of his mistake pressed down on him; heavier than any burden he had carried. His anger turned to embarrassment, and then to excitement. He apologized for his ignorance.

The shopkeeper smiled kindly. **"Wisdom is not in what you see, but in what you seek to understand."**

Etefia exhaled, his body trembling. He had spent years chasing a mystery that had always been in plain sight. He had faced mockery and endured hardship, all because he had failed to ask the right question.

With newfound humility, he bowed deeply before the shopkeeper. "Teach me," he said. "Show me how to use it properly."

The shopkeeper nodded. "That is the first wise thing you have said since entering my shop."

As Etefia listened and learned, the burden of his past mistakes lifted. He had returned to the Big City seeking truth, and now, at last, he had found it. But one question remained—would his village ever believe him again?

Only time would tell. He thanked the shopkeeper, and quickly headed back to the village.

Chapter Six:

The Rise of Etefia the Great

Etefia returned to Koguma in silence. There were no drummers to announce his arrival, no children running ahead in excitement. The once-celebrated hero had been written off as nothing more than a fool chasing shadows. The villagers barely acknowledged his presence, and those who did only cast him pitiful glances before turning away. Even his own parents greeted him with quiet disappointment, unwilling to endure another spectacle of failure.

But Etefia had changed.

He walked through the village with steady steps, a determined fire burning in his eyes. He no longer sought admiration or approval; he had found something far greater—understanding.

The next morning, Etefia climbed onto a raised wooden platform in the village square and called out to the people. "Hear me, people of Koguma! You called me a fool, and rightly so. But I have returned with knowledge, and with it, I shall prove that I am no fool, but Etefia the Great! When the rains come, I will show you the true power of the magic umbrella!"

Laughter echoed from the crowd. The people shook their heads, unwilling to be fooled twice. "Etefia the Fool is at it again!" they jeered. Even the elders dismissed him with knowing smiles, exchanging wise proverbs about those who refuse to learn from past mistakes.

But Etefia was unfazed. Day after day, he repeated his declaration. He visited homes, spoke to traders in the market, and even stood outside the king's palace, vowing that when the rains came, he would no longer be a laughingstock.

Then, the rainy season arrived.

Once again, the villagers gathered in the square, this time with far less anticipation and far more amusement. The king, seated on his throne, sighed heavily before raising a hand. "Etefia, the people have gathered. Let this be the last time we indulge in your folly."

Etefia stepped forward. He held the umbrella differently this time—firmly, with purpose. As the sky darkened and the first drops of rain fell, a hush spread through the crowd.

The rain poured, but unlike before, Etefia did not stand helplessly as it drenched him. With a calm, practiced motion, he pushed the umbrella open.

Gasps rang through the air as the rain pelted down all around him, yet not a single drop touched him. He stood beneath the umbrella, dry and proud, a triumphant smile spreading across his face.

The crowd erupted. The same people who had mocked him now rushed forward in astonishment. The elders nodded in approval, murmuring among themselves. The king, after a long moment of silence, rose to his feet.

"A man who learns from failure is wiser than the one who never tries," the king proclaimed. **"Etefia, you have shown us that true wisdom comes not from avoiding mistakes, but from understanding them. Today, you are no longer Etefia the Fool. You are Etefia the Great!"**

The villagers cheered, their voices echoing through the land. His parents, overwhelmed with joy, embraced him tightly. His father, who once doubted his dreams, clapped him on the back, saying, **"I always knew you had greatness in you, my son."**

His uncles, who had laughed at his failure before, now came forward, their faces filled with admiration. **"We knew you would make us proud,"** one of them said, nodding. His childhood friends, who had mocked him relentlessly, now looked at him with awe. **"Etefia, you have proven us all wrong. You truly are great,"** one of them admitted.

The villagers continued their cheers, and the drummers who once remained silent now beat their drums in celebration. Women danced, children sang, and the elders spoke of Etefia's story as a lesson for generations to come.

And so, Etefia the Great was born, not because of a magic umbrella, but because of his unyielding spirit.

Epilogue:

The Proverbs of Koguma

The rains came and went, and with them, the seasons turned the green of youth into the silver of wisdom. Etefia the Great did not remain merely a celebrated hero; he became the heart of Koguma's courage, and in time, one of the King's most trusted advisors.

He traveled again to the Big City, many times over. But he no longer went for personal glory or to chase a mystery. He went as a leader. He returned not just with more umbrellas for the villagers, but with seeds for hardier crops, with knowledge of how to filter water to keep the children healthy, and with ideas that sparked new life into the minds of the young.

The most profound change, however, was in the village's spirit. When a young girl dreamed of painting stories on cured hides instead of just mending pots, or when a boy tried to build a small, clumsy waterwheel by the river, they were no longer met with scorn. The villagers had learned their lesson. An elder might smile, stroke their chin, and say, **"Ah, let us see where this path leads. Even Etefia's great umbrella was once just a mysterious stick."**

His original umbrella, the simple black one that had been the source of both his greatest shame and his greatest triumph,

was never used in the rain again. It was given a place of honor in the king's court, a revered relic, a constant reminder not of magic, but of the simple, powerful truth that the greatest tool a person can possess is an open and inquisitive mind.

Over time, his long and fruitful life, his journey from mocked dreamer to celebrated hero to wise elder was distilled into five great truths. They became the proverbs of Koguma, lessons woven into the very fabric of the community, whispered from one generation to the next to ensure that the spirit of the boy who chased the rain would never be forgotten.

1. "A man's greatness is not in never failing, but in rising every time the world laughs at him."

2. "The road to success is often lonely, mocked by those who do not see the vision, but celebrated by the same people once the vision is fulfilled."

3. "True wisdom is not in what you possess, but in knowing how to use what you have."

4. "He who fears humiliation will never taste victory, for only those who dare to fail can truly succeed."

5. "Dreams do not die in failure; they die when the dreamer gives up. Keep going." ***Nathaniel Uwak (2025)***

Author's Note

The story of Etefia is one I carried in my heart long before I ever set it to paper. While Koguma Village is a world of my own making, the spirit of its most stubborn dreamer is deeply real to me, because in many ways, it is my own.

When I was twelve, my "Big City" was not a place of towering buildings, but a world of eighty-eight black and white keys on an old church piano. I wanted to play more than anything, but I was met with walls of doubt. My parents, wanting the best for me, urged me to focus on my studies, to learn mathematics and forget the frivolous pursuit of play. The elders in my church warned me away, saying I was too small, that such instruments were not meant for the hands of a child. Like Etefia, no one seemed to support the dream that burned so brightly within me.

So, I practiced in secret. I would sneak out of the house whenever there was power, my heart pounding with a mixture of fear and excitement, to spend time with the instrument that called to me. At one point, to keep me away, the Pastor began locking the church doors. I was even accused of spoiling the instruments, my small size making me an easy scapegoat. I was warned, time and again, to stay away from the band.

There were moments of public embarrassment, fumbling through notes in the middle of a service, the weight of disapproving eyes feeling heavier than any storm. But like Etefia with his umbrella, I was determined. I refused to give up. I believed in the magic I felt in my fingertips, even if no one else could see or hear it yet.

And then, after years of resilience, my reward came. The same people who had dismissed my dream began to see it as a gift from God. The same elders who had warned me away now called me an integral part of every service. I will never forget the day I couldn't attend a service, and the very same Pastor who had once locked the church doors sent members of the choir to my home to bring me back.

Etefia's journey is a parable for this truth: the world may not understand your dream. It may mock your ambition and belittle your efforts. But the road to success is paved with the resilience of a spirit that refuses to be broken. Your "magic umbrella" might be a piano, a paintbrush, a business idea, or a simple, heartfelt goal. Do not be discouraged if others do not see its power. Learn its secrets, endure the storms of doubt, and one day, you too will stand tall and vindicated, showing everyone the magic you knew was there all along.

ABOUT THE BOOK

In a village where voices are loud and dreams are small, one boy dared to listen to the whispers of the rain. Etefia is the unforgettable journey of a quiet boy, a forgotten umbrella, and a prophecy no one believed. Laughed at, mocked, and abandoned even by family. Etefia embarks on a daring quest for truth, magic, and redemption. Rooted in African storytelling and rich with symbols of resilience, this is a tale of becoming, of turning ridicule into respect, and silence into song. Etefia is a short-story, an inspirational prose every young person should make a hand-book.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nathaniel Uwak is an inspirational writer who published his first book, 'Succeeding in Life,' at the age of sixteen. Other books he has written are: 'More than Imagined (How Long you Wait is How long it takes),' 'Busy But not Productive,' 'Who and Whose are you?,' etc. 'Etefia' is his first inspirational short story. Nat Moore, as he is popularly called, uses his writing skills to inspire young people. He believes in potential; that bad chapters can still create great stories; that wrong paths can still lead to the right places; and that failed dreams can still create successful people.

He holds a BSc. degree in Marketing. He is a lover of arts, creativity, and God.